

Hint aid queen, baby-buying tie

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Chicago Tribune (1963-Current); Mar 24, 1975; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chicago Tribune pg. 3

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By George Bliss
and William Griffin

LINDA TAYLOR, Chicago's welfare queen, has been linked by Chicago police to a scheme to defraud the public aid department during the mid-1960s by buying newborn infants to substantiate welfare claims.

Police feared Sunday that one of the infants used by Miss Taylor may have been Paul Joseph Fronczak. In 1964, the one-day-old Fronczak infant was snatched from his mother's arms in Michael Reese Hospital by a woman dressed in white.

Miss Taylor, 47, has been dubbed the welfare queen because she is alleged to have bilked Illinois and 13 other states out of hundreds of thousands of dollars in false welfare claims. The Tribune reported Thursday that she has come under investigation by police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the Fronczak baby kidnapping.

RICHARD LISS, an investigator in the police gang crimes unit, told The Tribune Sunday that he turned over evidence of welfare fraud and baby buying to public aid authorities and the Cook County state's attorney in 1967, but that it never was used for criminal prosecution.

Miss Taylor, who then was calling herself Constance Womack and Beverly Singleton, told Liss and Investigator Charles McCall in 1967 that she had given birth to a boy in

Edgewater Hospital on Dec. 13, 1963—four months before the birth and kidnaping of the Fronczak baby. That child, she said, was living with foster parents in Chicago Heights.

But police checked hospital records and found discrepancies. First, the records showed that while the child was the mother's firstborn, Miss Taylor had admitted to having children earlier. Second, the mother's thumb print on the hospital records did not match that of Miss Taylor, Liss said.

THAT BIRTH certificate was signed by Dr. Grant W. Sill, who would testify several months later that Miss Taylor was actually Constance Wakefield, the daughter of Lawrence Wakefield, a policy wheel operator who left an estate of more than \$900,000.

Her claim of being Wakefield's daughter was disproved, and Miss Taylor was held in contempt of court.

In 1970, Dr. Sill, who had been charged with selling dangerous drug prescriptions to youngsters, agreed to give up his practice and leave Illinois to avoid prosecution.

LISS SAID his first contact with Miss Taylor was on Feb. 6, 1967, when he was called to her apartment at 4327 S. Calumet Av. to investigate the disappearance of her 19-month old son, Lena Womack.

In fact, the child was the son of Mrs. Lorraine Termini, 2424 W. Iowa St., and was re-

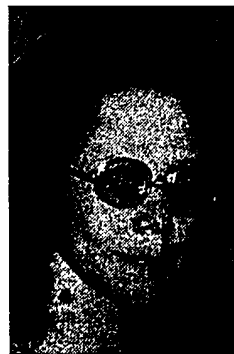
turned to his real mother by Miss Taylor's son, John, 16.

During their investigation, Liss and McCall learned that Miss Taylor was drawing welfare checks for 11 children by using two aliases. She also was obtaining federal support by claiming to be the widow of two naval commanders, Paul Stienberg and Paul Harbough, who were killed in action.

Liss kept a file of his investigation and realized its signif-

icance Thursday when he read Tribune accounts of the FBI's probe into the Fronczak baby kidnapping, he said.

The kidnapping never was solved. The child's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Chester Fronczak, later adopted a child who had been abandoned in New Jersey. That youngster appeared to be the same age as their son, and the parents believe him to be their natural child.



Linda Taylor